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Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 AID-05

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /044 W
---------- 126644
R 250402Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7068
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 2336

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIN EINV EAID LA
SUBJECT: BANK OF AMERICA REPRESENTATIVE VISITS LPDR

REF BANGKOK 23932

1. TIM WILLIAMS, ASSISTANT REPRESENTATIVE FROM BANK OF AMERICA ASIA REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE IN HONG KONG, VISITED VIENTIANE FROM SEPTEMBER 20 THROUGH 22. LAO OFFICIALS TALKED TO WILLIAMS ABOUT U.S. ASSISTANCE TO LAOS ON TWO OCCASIONS. KHAMTHAN RATANAVONG, FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR OF PROTOCOL, ASKED WILLIAMS TO USE HIS INFLUENCE AS BANK OF AMERICA REPRESENTATIVE TO ENCOURAGE US TO TAKE ACTION ON WHAT HE CALLED SENATOR MANSFIELD'S PROPOSAL THAT CONGRESS APPROPRIATE AID FOR INDOCHINA. (THIS APPEARS TO BE A RATHER LIBERAL EXTRAPOLATION BY KHAMTHAN FROM THE SENATOR'S AUGUST 26 STATEMENT.) LATER THAT SAME DAY OUDONE PHONSENA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL BANK, ASKED WILLIAMS TO ENCOURAGE BANK OF AMERICA TO FINANCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN LAOS
2. WILLIAMS FIRST MET WITH KHAMTHAN WHO PROMISED TO ARRANGE APPOINTMENTS FOR HIM WITH CHEF DE CABINET OF
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THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FIANCE,

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AND PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL BANK. ONLY THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL BANK, THONGCHANH OUPALAVANH, AND SECRETARY GENERAL OUDONE ACTUALLY MET WITH WILLIAMS, HOWEVER, KHAMTHAN SAID THAT MINISTRY OFFICIALS WERE BUSY WITH A SOVIET COMMERICAL DELEGATION AND DID NOT HAVE TIME TO MEET WITH WILLIAMS. ALTHOUGH A BRITISH NATIONAL, WILLIAMS FELT THAT OFFICIALS FROM MINISTRIES OTHER THAN THE NATIONAL BANK MAY HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO MEET WITH A REPRESENTATIVE FROM AN AMERICAN BANK. WHEN WILLIAMS MENTIONED TO OUDONE THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO MEET WITH MANY LAO OFFICIALS, THE WESTERN EDUCATED LAO WINKED AND ADVISED WILLIAMS, "JUST TELL YOUR BOSS BACK IN HONG KONG THAT LAO OFFICIALS WERE ATTENDING SEMINARS. I HAVE FOUND THAT IS A GREAT EXCUSE."

3. WILLIAMS TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER THAT THE LPDR CONTINUED TO HAVE AN ACCOUNT IN BANK OF AMERICA'S SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH AND THAT THE LAO SAID THEY PLANNED TO INCREASE FUNDS IN THAT ACCOUNT.

4. WILLIAMS WAS TOLD BY A LAO THAT THE THAI ARMY IS SELLING BARRELS OF GASOLINE TO LAO SMUGGLERS WHO BRING IT IN FOR SALE ON THE BLACK MARKET.
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